9/18/68

Dear Marge,

Thanks for your very nice letter of the 16th. However, I think the explanation given you by Secret Service Agent Camp is inadequate. It also leaves the situation where it can be used against Godfrey, against his getting out, if only for a day or part of a day at a time, and getting some fresh air, sunshine, a lifting scent of life and a view of it. Let me explain.

If the Secret Service had a "watch" on every "unstable personality", how many people would be walking the streets?

Why should they consider that all "unstable personalities" are a threat to the President? Obviously, they do not. Therefore, they must have some reason for believing that Godfrey, aside from his being from time to time unstable, does represent some kind of threat to the President. This, reason, I think, you ought to have in writing and completely. If they do not give it to you there is something else.

I think it must be obvious to you that it is not merely because Godfrey may be "unstable" that they wouldn't let him go for a walk with me when he so much wanted to. I think it is also obbious that when a man has been confined inside as long as he has been, from a medical standpoint, getting outside, if only for a few minutes, is very good for him, particularly when it was such a beautiful day and I had with me a young woman who, as you know, certainly had known him and your home very well.

This "watch", whatever it is, can be used forever to continue this restraint. It is on his record at the hospital and may be the only reason they did not permit him the for-him luxury of a few moments outside a jail and in the open, a few fleeting moments of the feeling of freedom.

I am taking the liberty of making a few suggestions. I think perhaps you may want to discuss this with Bill. I think you should, if necessary through your lawyer, ask the medical authorities and insist on getting a transcript of his entire medical record, complete with all treatments, particularly changes in them and the reasons for these and who ordered them, from the first to the present. If there is any medical need for his being always confined, it should show on this. If it does not, there is a presumption that he could be allowed outside four walls once in a while. I want very much to study his medical record and have it studied by medical authorities I can consult who are intependent. Frankly, some of the things Godfrey told me disturb me, if they are correct. I think you should still ask the Secret Service, and in writing, for a written, complete explanation of all the information they have on Godfrey, its source, and why they consider him, of all "unstable personalities", one requiring permanent, daily "watch".

Aside from Godfrey, who must be considered, particularly when he cannot look out for himself, and the country, there are those close to him. Remember in particular the little girl and the stimgatizing this can cause her, especially as she grows older and reaches young womanhood.

If this is a genuine Secret Service action, with no monkey business, I can conceive of no reason for them refusing you this information, in full detail. If they refuse it, I would be suspicious. Remember, he told you certain things. If the Secret Service knows these things, they must have them from some source other than you and Maude Ellen. I conceive it possible that there are sources with ulterior motive. Further, I believe this is something you owe the country, for there must never be a day when a man can be confined on the unsupported whim of some

federal bureaucrat. If the situation is really one where Godfrey should be under permanent restraint because he is a threat to the President, I think you would be content for it to exist. If there is such a situation, the authorities should have no reluctance to satisfy you on this score. But if they are unwilling to do this or if they cannot, how will you feel in the future when you come to understand it? Will you feel that as his mother you have done everything you could for your son? I think you may be troubled if you do not get a firm, full record that satisfies you and, may I ask, me, too?

Let us both be absolutely certain also that Godfrey is not being made into a Patsy for someone else.

I ask also that you do this promptly, for if and when it is possible, I want to return to New Orleans. I do not know when this will or can be, because my financial condition is not improved. However, it is possible that on a trip elsewhere I can get to New Orleans without paying extra fare. In that event, I would just drop in on you. Also, I am in contact with the Secret Service about other matters and I want to be satisfied that on the highest level they are aware of this and in full accord with it. I do not want to raise the question on that level until I have all the available information from other sources.

Within a few days I expect a friend who does have another official connection to be in New Orleans on other business. He will be pressed for time. I have asked him to phone you on his arrival and then to ask you to gather together everything of Godfrey's you can find and give it to him for him to carry to me and hand it to me personally. I do hope you will do this without delay. It can be important. If it is not, we will have wasted only a little time.

Marge, I have seen nothing that in any way indicates Godfrey could not be out once in a while. I believe this would be very good for him. I believe he is interested in nothing because he is so whipped. He can do worthwhile things. He is a creative person. If he could get out only infrequently, it would give him pleasure and hope. Now he has neither. If we could kindle his desire to do nothing but sketch and write a short poem now and then we could make his life so much more pleasant, at least more tolerable. I think we should try.

Please do these things without delay. When you write the Secret Service, please send me a copy. Ditto with the hospital.

Again, thanks for the nice things you said. I fully expect to accept your invitation, and I hope it is not far in the future.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg